

**JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF CALIFORNIA  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS**

455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102-3688

TO: Members of the Judicial Council

FROM: Christine M. Hansen  
Director, Finance Division

DATE: October 20, 2003

SUBJECT: Approval of Trial Court Travel Expense Reimbursement Policy  
and Procedures

Issue Statement

Government Code section 69505 (see below) requires the Administrative Director of the Courts to annually recommend to the Judicial Council for approval policies, schedules for reimbursement of travel expenses, and procedures for processing these requests, for judges and employees of the trial courts.

**69505.** Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the following procedures shall apply for business-related travel expenses of judges and employees of the trial courts:

(a) The Administrative Director of the Courts shall annually recommend policies and schedules for reimbursement of travel expenses and procedures for processing these requests, which shall be approved by the Judicial Council and shall be followed by the trial courts.

(b) Each court shall develop a system for presentation and approval of requests that shall ensure that requests are reviewed in an impartial and appropriate manner and that conforms to the policies, schedules, and procedures approved by the Judicial Council.

Each court must then develop a system for presentation and approval of business-related travel expenses to ensure that requests are reviewed in an impartial and appropriate manner, and that the process conforms to the policies, schedules, and procedures approved by the Judicial Council.

Rule of Court 6.707 (Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures) requires the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to prepare and adopt a financial policies and procedures manual for the trial courts that is consistent with the rules of court and policies adopted by the Judicial Council. The AOC is required by Rule of Court 6.707 to make the manual available for comment from the trial courts and from the Department of Finance and the State Controller's Office for 30 days. Trial courts are not required to adhere to any amendment to the manual sooner than 60 days after the amendment is

adopted. The comment and adoption period has been completed this year (effective date is Oct. 1, 2003) and contained in the manual is a section on employee travel expense reimbursement.

### Recommendation

The Administrative Director of the Courts recommends that:

- The Judicial Council, effective December 1, 2003, adopt the policies, schedules, and procedures for trial court business-related travel expenses contained in the *Trial Court Financial Policies and Procedures Manual* under policy section AOC FIN 8.03, Employee Travel Expense Reimbursement (attached). The travel rates referred to in paragraph 6.3.2.2 of AOC FIN 8.03 are detailed in the Serranus website ([serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov](http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov)) and are attached.
- These policies do not change any terms of a memorandum of understanding or agreement by and between a recognized employee organization and a trial court, entered into before December 1, 2003. It is recommended that upon expiration of a memorandum of understanding or agreement by and between a recognized employee organization and a trial court, entered into before December 1, 2003, that the policies mentioned above apply.
- Trial courts that now process their travel expense claims through their county will now be required to follow this reimbursement policy regardless of the rates that the counties may allow.

The adoption of the related expense restriction by the Judicial Council at its August meeting is not contained in the above policy but is included in this annual recommendation. The restriction eliminated reimbursement for travel-related lunch meals for all calendar days for all judges, commissioners, and those non-represented personnel who earn over \$100,000 per year.

### Rationale for Recommendation

The adoption of this recommendation will allow the control system regarding business-related travel expenses for judges and trial court employees to be uniform and consistent throughout the state.

Trial courts may decide to allow judges (not employees) to make their own travel arrangements provided costs are the same or less than those made through a travel planner designated by the trial court. This procedure must be documented at the individual courts that make this decision.

A Finance Memo will be issued upon approval of the above recommendations to notify the trial courts.

Alternative Actions Considered

None

Comments From Interested Parties

None

Implementation Requirements and Costs

None

Attachments